

K13 Guidance Document

Purpose

The purpose of the K13 code is to identify incidents that are (or have the potential to be) traumatic, distressing or may be infectious to our personnel.

When should a K13 be transmitted?

A K13 should be transmitted by the Officer in Charge (OIC) after any incident that was or had the potential to be traumatic, distressing or infectious. This can be done in combination with a K41, or separately when an incident has not resulted in a fatality but has or could have caused distress to any member of the crew.

What is a traumatic or distressing event?

Traumatic events are subjective by nature, meaning what is traumatic for one firefighter may not be traumatic for another. Therefore, it is important for crews to have post-incident discussions to determine whether to transmit a K13. If in doubt, it is best to err on the side of caution and transmit a K13.

Examples of potentially traumatic events may include critical incidents involving the loss of life, such as in the case of fire, MVA, and medical fatalities. Additionally, it can include events where there is not a fatality, but the circumstances of the call were still potentially traumatic, such as bereaved or hostile bystanders, assaults, significant injuries, knowing the casualty, failed rescue attempts, ineffective equipment, etc.

What happens when a K13 is transmitted?

The K13 will be recorded in the message log that sits within the Incident Report. This information can be used to later determine the number of traumatic or potentially traumatic events attended by operational personnel.

Transmitting a K13 will not automatically initiate a wellbeing response from Safety, Health and Wellbeing or Peer Support. If wellbeing support is required immediately after an incident this should be requested via the Com Centre. Our full list of support services can be found [here](#).

What if after the event is closed the OIC or a member of the crew want to log an incident that was traumatic or potentially traumatic?

An entry into Safe@Work under the psychological event tab should be completed and this allows the option of requesting a follow up phone call. For more guidance please see the psychological event [guide](#).

If you require any further guidance about the K13 code please contact your Region's Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advisor or Welfare Officer.

What is the difference between transmitting a K13 and entering a Safe@Work psychological event?

Transmitting a K13 provides the opportunity to categorise an incident as traumatic or distressing, which will link directly to the incident and provide oversight of the number of traumatic events personnel are attending. Even if operational personnel don't need wellbeing support, recording the

number of potentially traumatic or distressing incidents help us see how many of these types of incidents our people attend.

Safe@Work provides the option of a follow up phone call, can be individually entered, and includes wider range of reporting including work pressure, conflict, etc.

Can I transmit a K13 and enter a Safe@Work psychological event?

Yes! Transmitting a K13 will ensure that the traumatic or distressing incident is captured in reporting, and entering the Safe@Work psychological event gives the option to trigger support from the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Team.